26.

FROM THE MOST INTIMATE EXPERIENCE OF THE THINKER.—Nothing is harder for a man than to conceive of an object impersonally, I mean to see In it an object and not a person. One may even ask whether It Is possible for him to dispense for a single moment with the machinery of his instinct to create and construct a personality. After all, he associates with his thoughts, however abstract they may be, as with individuals, against whom he must figrrc or to whom he must attach himself, whom he must protect, support and nourish. Let us watch or listen to ourselves at the moment when we hear or discover a new idea. Perhaps It displeases us because It is so defiant and so autocratic, and we unconsciously ask ourselves whether we cannot place a contradiction of It by its side as an enemy, or fasten on to It a "perhaps" or a " sometimes ": the mere little word " probably' ' gives us a feeling of satisfaction, for it shatters the oppressive tyranny of the unconditional. If, on the other hand, the new Idea enters in gentle shape, sweetly patient and humble, and falling at once into the arms of contradiction, we put our autocracy to the test in another way. Can we not come to the aid of this weak creature, stroke it and feed it, give it strength and fulness, and truth and even unconditionally ? Is It possible for us to show ourselves parental or chivalrous or compassionate towards our idea ?—Then again, we see here a judgment and there a judgment, sundered from each other, never looking at or making any move-